

GIANT-SIZE  
DEFENDERS

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# GIANT-SIZE DEFENDERS

FEATURING THE STAR-  
STUDDED RETURN OF  
THE MAN CALLED  
**YELLOWJACKET!**

PUNY HUMANS KILLED  
**NIGHTHAWK!**

NOW WE  
WILL KILL  
**YOU!**

**NEW!!** ONCE MORE...THE  
SQUADRON SINISTER!

# TOO COLD A NIGHT FOR DYING!

"FOR SEVERAL WEEKS NOW, KYLE RICHMOND-- MILLIONAIRE, JET-SETTER, ALLEGED BEAUTIFUL PERSON--HAS BEEN SEEN EXCLUSIVELY IN THE COMPANY OF MODEL TRISH STARR, TOUTED BY THOSE WHO KNOW AS 'THE FACE OF 1975.' HER BODY ISN'T BAD, EITHER. DO WE HEAR WEDDING BELLS IN THEIR FUTURE... OR ONLY THE Jangling OF SILVER?"

--RHODA BARNETT  
SYNDICATED TV  
GOSSIP-MONGER

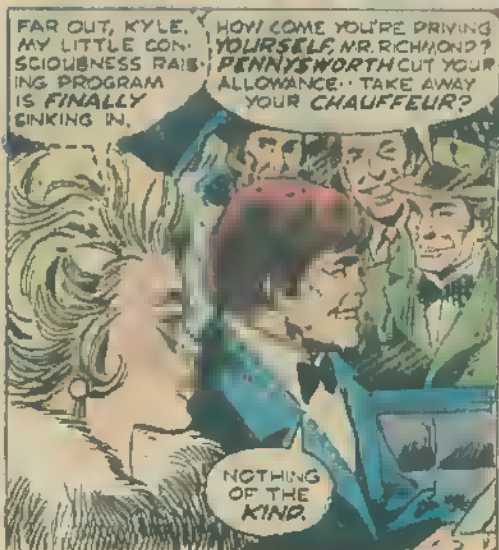
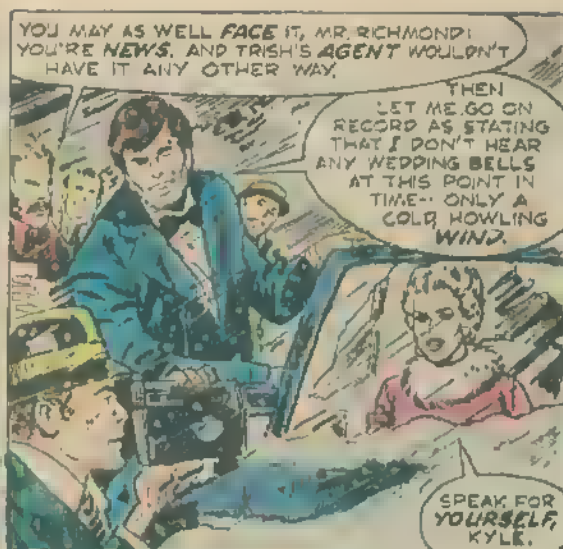
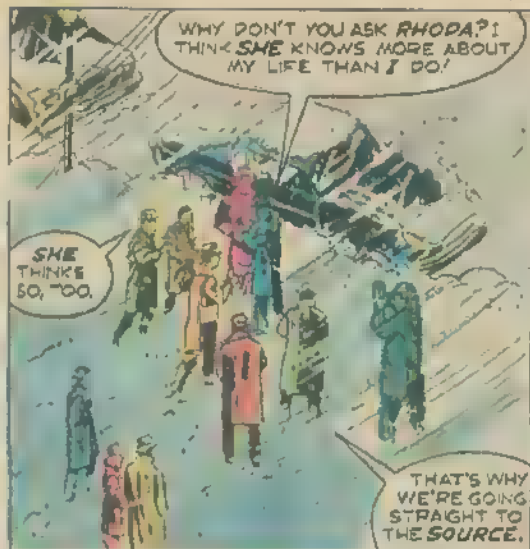
NEW YORK'S  
LINCOLN  
CENTER  
FOR THE  
PERFORMING  
ARTS--  
JANUARY 4, 1975.

TONIGHT'S CONCERT  
WAS ONLY FAIR. THE  
REAL ATTRACTION,  
AT LEAST FOR THE  
PRESS, WAS THE  
CELEBRITIES IN THE  
AUDIENCE.

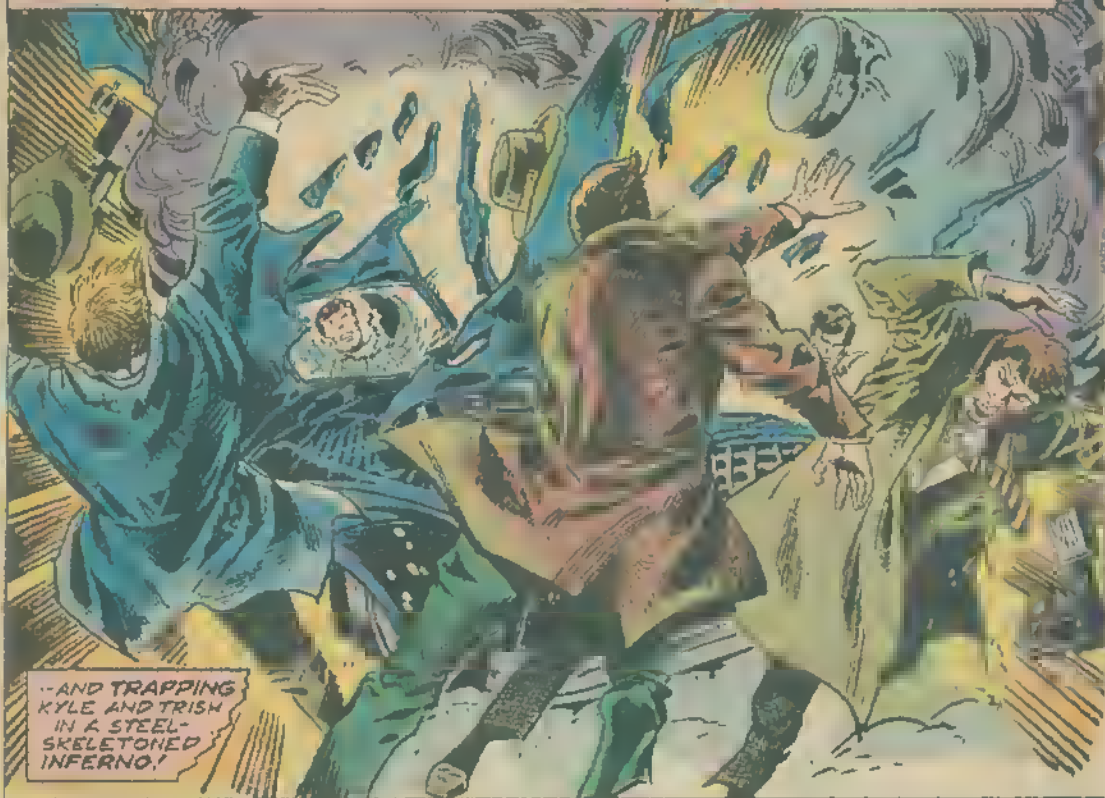
HOW 'BOUT IT,  
MR. RICHMOND,  
MISS STARR...  
ANY TRUTH  
TO THOSE  
RUMORS?

STEVE GERBER / DON HECK / VINCE COLLETTA / DAVID HUNT, LETTERER / LEN WEIN  
WRITER / ARTIST / INKER / PETRA GOLDBERG, COLORIST / EDITOR





...AND SUDDENLY THE PALE WHITE NIGHT ERUPTS IN CRIMSON AND AMBER FRENZY A BOMB, WIRED TO THE IGNITION SWITCH, BLOWS THE ENGINE OF KYLE'S AUTO TO BITS, BATTERING THE NEWSMEN WITH JAGGED SHARDS OF RED-HOT METAL, HURLING THEM TO THE GROUND--



SIRENS WAILING, TIRES SKIDDING WILDLY ON THE ICE-GLAZED, SNOW-PACKED PAVEMENT, EMERGENCY VEHICLES RACE UP BROADWAY TO THE SITE OF THE DISASTER.

MEDICS, FIREFIGHTERS, POLICE... BRAVING THE PERILOUS STREETS, RISKING THEIR OWN LIVES IN AN ATTEMPT TO SAVE OTHERS.



GET ANOTHER STRETCHER OVER HERE! THAT GAL'S IN BAD SHAPE!

I DON'T GET IT. WHAT KINDA SCREWBALL'D PULL A THING LIKE THIS?

SOMEBODY WHO'S GOT IT OUT FOR RICH PEOPLE'S MY GUESS. RICHMOND'S WORTH MILLIONS.

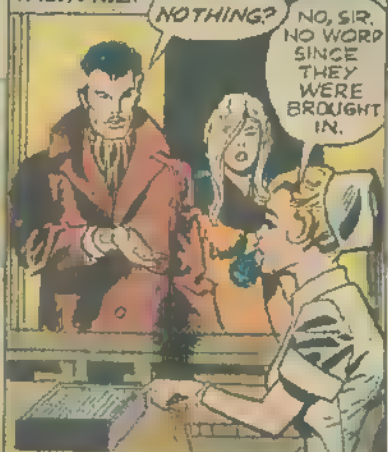
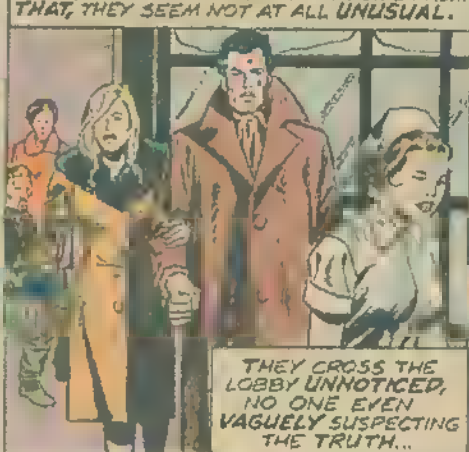
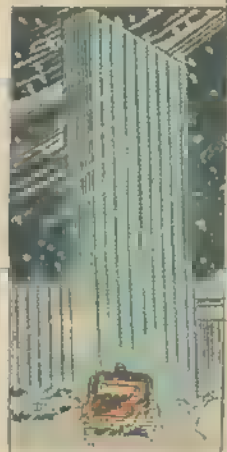




A WEST SIDE HOSPITAL, NOT HALF AN HOUR LATER.

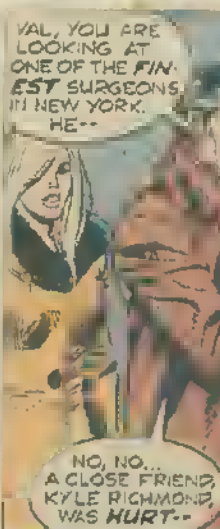
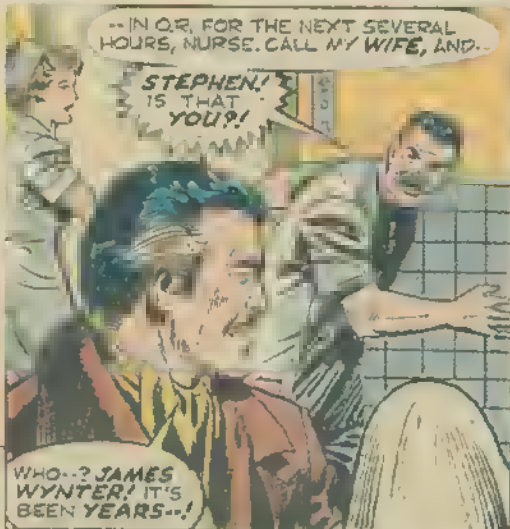
TWO VISITORS ARRIVE, HAVING BEEN APPRISED BY TELEPHONE OF KYLE RICHMOND'S MISFORTUNE. THEIR EXPRESSIONS, NATURALLY, ARE GRIM... SOBER. BUT ASIDE FROM THAT, THEY SEEM NOT AT ALL UNUSUAL.

... THAT THEY ARE DR. STRANGE, MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS, AND THE WOGMAH WARRIOR CALLED VALKYRIE!



THEY CROSS THE LOBBY UNNOTICED, NO ONE EVEN VAGUELY SUSPECTING THE TRUTH...

NOTHING? NO, SIR. NO WORD SINCE THEY WERE BROUGHT IN.



-- IN O.R. FOR THE NEXT SEVERAL HOURS, NURSE. CALL MY WIFE, AND--

STEPHEN! IS THAT YOU?!

VAL, YOU ARE LOOKING AT ONE OF THE FINEST SURGEONS IN NEW YORK. HE--

NEVER MIND ME. WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE ON A MISERABLE NIGHT LIKE THIS? YOU'RE NOT ILL?

WHO--? JAMES WYNTER! IT'S BEEN YEARS--!

NO, NO... A CLOSE FRIEND, KYLE RICHMOND, WAS HURT--

DON'T I KNOW IT? HE'S MY PATIENT, STEPHEN.



I SHOULD HAVE GUESSED. WE BOTH MOVED IN THOSE SOCIAL CIRCLES BEFORE... MY ACCIDENT. HOW IS HE, JAMES?

HE'S BEING PREPPED FOR SURGERY-- AND I'M ON MY WAY TO THE O.R. NOW. I COULD USE YOUR HELP ON THIS ONE, STEPHEN.

MY HELP? BUT YOU KNOW ABOUT MY ACCIDENT, JAMES. MY HANDS ARE NO LONGER STEADY ENOUGH...

I MEANT AS A CONSULTANT-- SOMEONE TO GUIDE MY HANDS. DO IT, PLEASE. FOR TWO OF YOUR FRIENDS.

I-- YES, I SHALL.

SEVERAL RIBS BROKEN ... INTERNAL HEMORRHAGING...

SCRUBBING UP: THE SMELL OF ANTISEPTICS... THE METALLIC POUNDING OF RUSHING WATER AGAINST GLEAMING STAINLESS STEEL... THE GRIM REALIZATION THAT A HUMAN LIFE WAITS IN THE ADJOINING ROOM TO BE SAVED...!



ODD... THAT A MAN WHO HAS SAVED WHOLE UNIVERSES SHOULD TREMBLE AT THE THOUGHT.

THOROUGHLY INEFFECTABLE... THAT HE SOMEHOW CONSIDERS THIS MORE U... THAN THE SALVATION OF A COSMOS.



PROPORTION PERCEPTION TRICKS OF THE MIND.

HE HAS HEARD THE UNIVERSE SPEAK TO HIM, FELT IT TOUCH HIM... HE HAS LEARNED TO REGARD HIMSELF AS A KIND OF ANTIBODY IN THE COSMIC FLOW... AND YET...



WHAT LIES ON THIS TABLE IS NOT MERELY AN AGGREGATION OF ATOMS ARRANGED AS FLESH AND BONE AND BLOOD NOT MERELY A RANDOM CONFIGURATION OF KALEIDOSCOPIC FATE.

MOND, NIGHTHAWK. AN INCISION IS MADE... AND HE BLEEDS.

THE WORK PROCEEDS... BUT SLOWLY... TOO SLOWLY... HOURS DRAG ON... HOURS IN WHICH HE COULD BE SUMMONING TOGETHER THE OTHER DEFENDERS TO SEARCH OUT THE PERPETRATORS OF THE



THE HULK... SUB-MARINER... THE SILVER SURFER... PERHAPS EVEN POWER MAN... DAREDEVIL... DAMON HELLETRON... HAWKEYE...

BUT WOULD THEY ANSWER HIS SUMMONS?... THE "TEAM" WAS FORMED TO SAVE WORLDS, NOT TO AVENGE ONE MAN... THE HULK WOULD ANSWER... "BIPP, NOSE IS HULK'S FRIEND!"... THE HULK... THE



STEPHEN-?

DID YOU HEAR ME? I ASKED ABOUT THIS... STEPHEN IS ANYTHING WRONG? YOU LOOK A TRIFLE PALE, MAYBE YOU'D BETTER GO...?



NO, THE STRAIN GOT TO ME FOR A MOMENT, I'LL BE FINE.



REALITY... ONE REALITY... SNAPS BACK INTO FOCUS. THE SURGERY MOVES ON...



...AND EVENTUALLY, IT IS FINISHED.

I'D NEVER HAVE SUSPECTED IT. HIS CONSTITUTION IS REMARKABLE. TO SWEAR HE HAD THE STRENGTH OF TWO MEN.

BARRING COMPLICATIONS HE SHOULD PULL THROUGH BEAUTIFULLY.

AND WHAT OF THE GIRL WHO WAS WITH HIM?

CAN'T SAY. I HAVEN'T SPOKEN TO HER DOCTOR.

THEY'RE BOTH LUCKY TO BE ALIVE, THOUGH. KYLE HAD NO GAS IN THE TANK. CAN YOU IMAGINE...?

NO GAS? NONE AT ALL? JAMES, ARE YOU SURE?

THAT'S WHAT THE POLICE SAID.

AND IT DIDN'T STRIKE YOU AS... CURIOUS?

I SUPPOSE, NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, I-- GOOD LORD!

STEPHEN... THANK HEAVEN! HE CAME CRASHING THROUGH THE WALL!...

AT LAST! MAGICIAN WILL TAKE HULK TO BIRD-NOSE.

HULK WANTS TO SEE FRIEND! SKK!

YOU MUST BE CALM, HULK. NO ONE CAN SEE HIM, NOT YET.

MY GOD, STRANGE --KEEP BACK! HE'LL CRUSH YOU!

HULK WILL CRUSH DUMB DOCTOR-- IF NOBODY TAKES HULK TO SICK BIRD-NOSE!

NO, MY FRIEND. HE WILL LIVE.. THANKS TO DR. WYNTER.

WHAT? WHO ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

BIRD-NOSE IS NOT...?

DOCTOR HELP HULK'S FRIEND? THEN DOCTOR IS FRIEND TOO!

EXACTLY, HULK.  
NOW, PLEASE, CALM  
YOURSELF.

JAMES... I THINK  
I'D BEST BE ON MY  
WAY... ALONG  
WITH YOUR NEW  
FRIEND.

TH-THAT'S  
FINE WITH ME  
... BUT THE  
WALL, WHO'LL  
PAY FOR THE  
WALL?

I'LL SEE THAT  
IT'S TAKEN CARE OF.  
HAVE NO FEAR.

...TOWARD THE GREENWICH VILLAGE SANCTUM  
SANCTORUM OF DR. STRANGE.

HULK KNOW  
FROM MAGICIAN!  
MAGICIAN'S VOICE  
IN HULK'S HEAD  
TOLD HULK TO  
COME HERE!

AND  
SUDDENLY,  
THE BIZARRE  
TRUTH DAWNS  
ON THE MYSTIC

THEN, AS WYINTER GAPES IN AMAZEMENT, THE  
GREEN BEHEMOTH LEAPS BACK THROUGH THE  
HOLE HE CREATED, OUT INTO THE SNOWY SKY..

HULK, I DON'T  
UNDERSTAND  
... HOW DO  
YOU KNOW  
ABOUT KYLE?

THERE WAS A MOMENT  
IN THE OPERATING  
ROOM WHEN I WAS  
OVERCOME BY  
STRAIN.

I MUST HAVE LAPPED  
INTO A TRANCE LIKE  
STATE... WHILE HULK  
AND THE OTHER DEFEN-  
DERS WERE ON MY MIND.  
I SUMMONED HIM  
WITHOUT EVEN  
KNOWING IT!

BUT  
COME IN FROM  
THE COLD, THERE'S  
ANOTHER MYSTERY  
TO BE DEALT WITH.



IT IS NOW TWO A.M., AND IN THEIR HOME IN SNOWBOUND SUBURBAN SOUTHAMPTON, BIOCHEMIST HENRY PYM AND WIFE JANET STARE BLANK-EYED AT THE TUBE.

DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU, LOVER... BUT I'M READY FOR BED.

COMING? OR WOULD YOU RATHER CATCH THE LATE-LATE MOVIE?

"ZOMBIE IN A GIRL'S DORMITORY"? ARE YOU KIDDING?

I'LL BE ALONG AS SOON AS THE NEWS IS OVER.

...BIZARRE BOMBING ON BROADWAY LATE SATURDAY NIGHT.

INJURED IN THE BLAST WERE MILLIONAIRE KYLE RICHMOND AND WELL-KNOWN FASHION MODEL TRISH STARR, SEEN IN THIS PHOTO TAKEN JUST BEFORE THE TRAGEDY.



TRIXIE!

BOTH ARE REPORTED IN SERIOUS CONDITION AT MANHATTAN'S ROOSEVELT HOSPITAL. POLICE ARE INVESTIGATING, BUT...



YOU KNOW THAT GIRL?

YOU MIGHT SAY THAT I OWE HER MY LIFE. MONTHS BACK, WHEN I WAS TRAPPED AT ANT-MAN SIZE... SHE SAVED ME FROM A BULLET FIRED BY HER UNCLE--

--WHO JUST HAPPENED TO BE EGGHEAD!



\*SEE MARVEL FEATURE #5 --LEN.

NOT ONLY THAT... SHE HELPED DESTROY ALL HIS PRIZED SCIENTIFIC EQUIPMENT. I THOUGHT HE'D DIED IN THE FIRE THAT FOLLOWED.

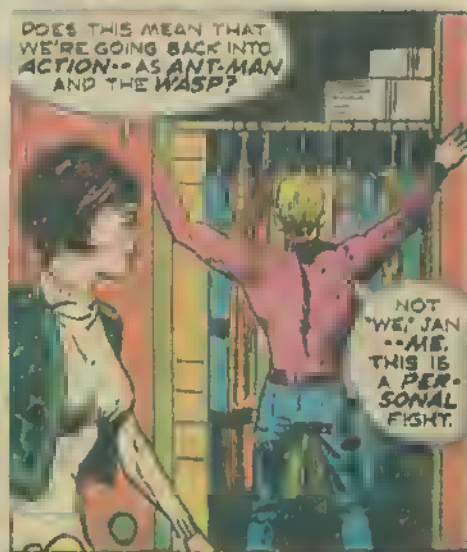


LOOKS LIKE I WAS MIS-TAKEN.



YOU THINK EGGHEAD PLANTED THAT BOMB?

DOES THIS MEAN THAT WE'RE GOING BACK INTO ACTION--AS ANT-MAN AND THE WASP?



NOT "WE," JAN --ME. THIS IS A PERSONAL FIGHT.

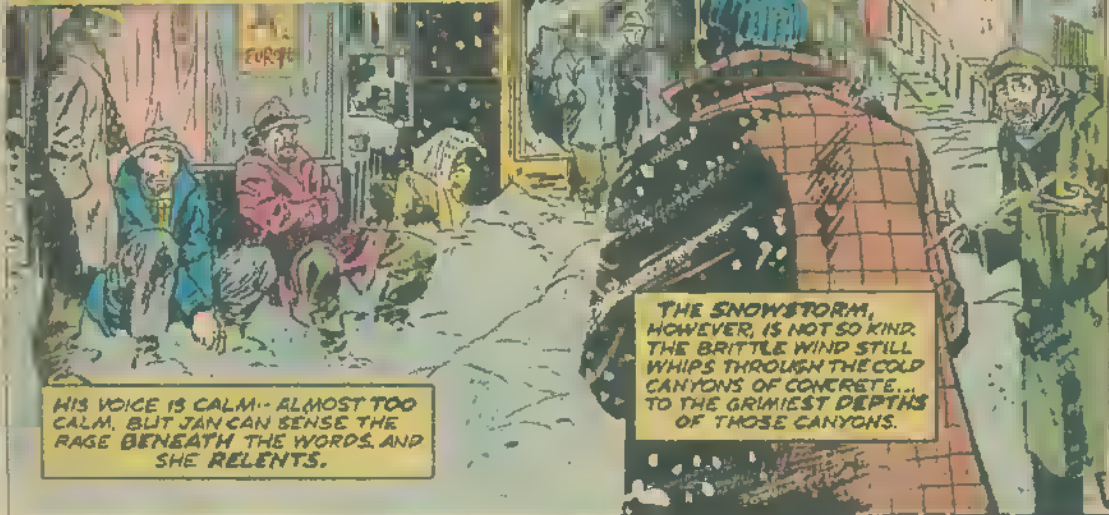
NOW WAIT JUST A MINUTE, MISTER PYM! WE'RE A TEAM, REMEMBER? WHERE YOU GO -- I GO!

NOT THIS TIME, JAN. I'M ASKING YOU TO RESPECT MY WISHES. I WANT TO TACKLE EGGHEAD ALONE.

AND NOT AS ANT-MAN. I'VE BEEN WORKING ON SOME NEW GADGETS LATELY...

...AND THEY SEEM MORE SUITED TO ANOTHER OF MY COSTUMED IDENTITIES.

JAN CONTINUES TO PROTEST, BUT HANK STANDS FIRM: "HE'S MY ENEMY, NOT YOURS -- AND YOU'VE NEVER EVEN MET TRIxie. OYE HER THIS, JAN. AND WHAT I OWE EGG-HEAD -- YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO SEE."

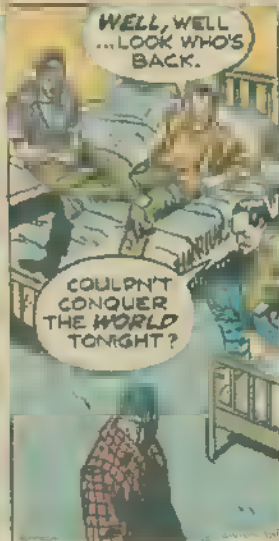


HIS VOICE IS CALM -- ALMOST TOO CALM. BUT JAN CAN SENSE THE RAGE BENEATH THE WORDS, AND SHE RELENTS.

THE SNOWSTORM, HOWEVER, IS NOT SO KIND. THE BRITTLE WIND STILL WHIPS THROUGH THE COLD CANYONS OF CONCRETE... TO THE GRIMEST DEPTHS OF THOSE CANYONS.

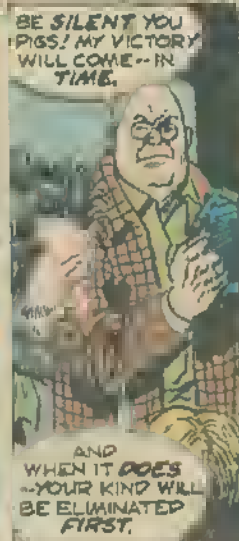


THE BOWERY. HUMANITY'S BOTTOM LINE, WHERE A BED FOR THE NIGHT IS NOW UP TO FIFTY CENTS.



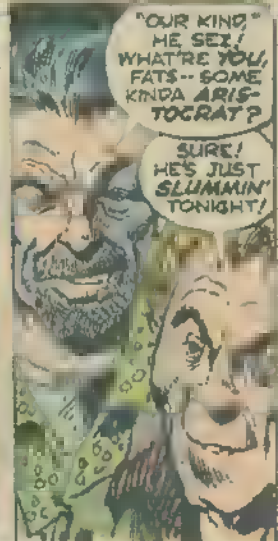
WELL, WELL... LOOK WHO'S BACK.

COULDN'T CONQUER THE WORLD TONIGHT?



BE SILENT YOU PIGS! MY VICTORY WILL COME -- IN TIME.

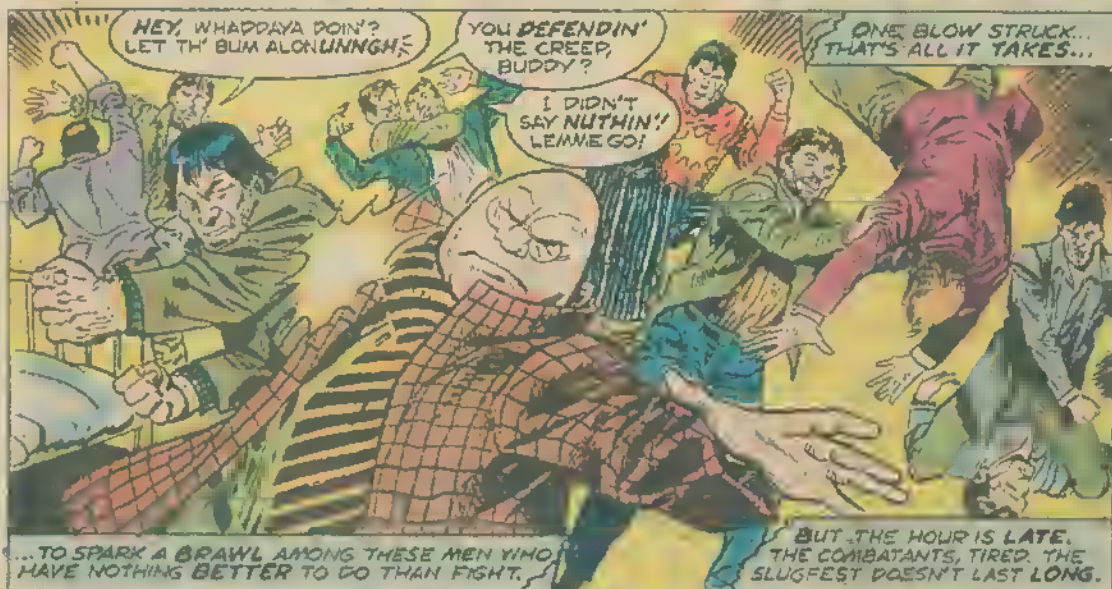
AND WHEN IT DOES -- YOUR KIND WILL BE ELIMINATED FIRST.



"OUR KIND," HE SEIZ, WHAT'RE YOU, FATS -- SOME KINDA ARISTOCRAT?

SURE! HE'S JUST SLUMMIN' TONIGHT!





# CHAPTER TWO

# FLIGHT OF THE YELLOWJACKET!

THE RAW, PIERCING WIND BLOWS IN BITTER-COLD GUSTS, BUFFETING THE FLYING FORM OF HENRY PYM--YELLOWJACKET--AS HE SHOOPS DOWN OVER THE SNOW-BLANKETED MANHATTAN ROOFTOPS.

FOUR YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE LAST HE DONNED THIS COSTUME OF BLACK AND GOLD... SINCE LAST ITS WING APPARATUS LET HIM SOAR UNENCUMBERED THROUGH THE SKIES.

AND DESPITE THE SUB-ZERO COLD DESPITE THE FIERY ANGER WHICH BURNS WITHIN HIM... HE CAN'T NOT HELP BUT FEEL A CERTAIN EXHILARATION.

I'LL ADMIT TO MYSELF THAT LIFE AMONG THE TEST TUBES CAN'T HOLD A BUSSER BURNER TO THIS.

\*AVENGERS #76, --LEN.

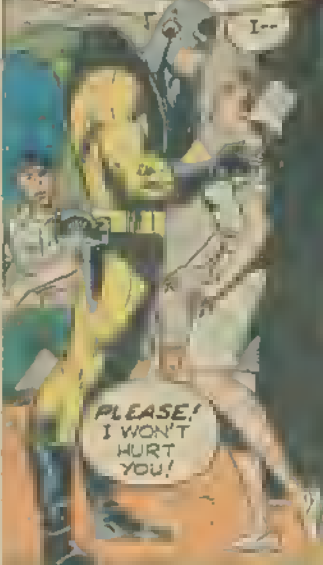


SUDDENLY, THE THRILL IS GONE, REPLACED BY STARK FEAR FOR TRISH STARR'S LIFE.





NURSE, WHAT HAPPENED HERE? IS TRIxie STARR ON THIS FLOOR? IS SHE SAFE? BLAST IT--STOP STARING AND ANSWER ME!!



TREMBLING, THE NURSE TELLS HER TALE...AND WHEN SHE IS DONE, IT IS YELLOWJACKET'S TURN TO BE STARTLED



SHE DESCRIBES DR. STRANGE, EXPLAINS THAT HE ASSISTED IN AN OPERATION...BUT YELLOWJACKET'S FEARS ARE ONLY PARTIALLY ALLAYED



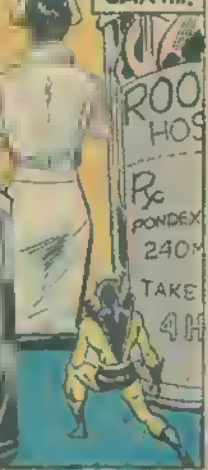
WAIT! NO ONE'S ALLOWED--SHE CAN'T HAVE VISITORS--NOT 'TIL MORNING!



THE NURSE RACES AFTER HIM, ONLY A FEW STEPS BEHIND... BUT WHEN SHE ROUNDS THE CORNER...



OR SO IT SEEMS. BUT HAD SHE LOOKED MORE CLOSELY... AT THE MEDICINE CART...!



HE CAN SLIP INTO TRIxie'S ROOM THROUGH THE CRACK UNDER THE DOOR.



MY BLOOD STILL CONTAINS TRACES OF THE MICROBE THAT TRAPPED ME AT THAT SIZE...AND I CAN'T RISK ACTIVATING IT AGAIN. HAVE TO USE THE CYBERNETIC SIZE-CHANGING CIRCUITRY IN MY COWL... JUDICIOUSLY.

GOOD HEAVENS!!

WH-WHERE DID YOU COME FROM? GET OUT OF HERE! DON'T TAKE ANOTHER STEP, OR I'LL--

THAT VOICE... HENRY PYM! IS IT REALLY YOU... HENRY...?

HE NODS... THE NURSE STEPS ASIDE... HE DRAWS CLOSER... AND SEES THE TERRIBLE PAIN ETCHED ON TRISH'S FACE...

EASY... I'M AN OLD FRIEND OF TRISH'S. I DON'T MEAN ANY HARM.

TRISHIE... WHAT DO THE DOCTORS SAY? ARE YOU GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT?

OH, HANK... THEY DON'T KNOW... MY ARM... THE LEFT ONE... THEY MAY HAVE TO...

OH, MY GOD...!

TRISHIE, YOU AND I BOTH KNOW WHO DID THIS TO YOU. WHERE IS HE? I'M NOT GOING TO LET HIM GET AWAY WITH IT.

HE... WE RUINED THE LAST OF HIS EVIL MACHINES... HE HAD NO... NO MONEY... HE CALLED ME... WEEKS AGO...

AND YOU REFUSED TO LOAN HIM ANYTHING BECAUSE YOU KNEW HOW HE'D PUT IT TO USE.

YES...

HANK PYM STEPS SLOWLY AWAY FROM THE BED... AND MUTE WITH ANGER, SILENTLY SHAKES HIS FIST AT THE SKY... EVEN WITHOUT SPEAKING...

THEY WON'T KNOW... 'TIL MORNING... HANK, I'M SO SCARED...!

...FROM THE BOWERY... LAST TIME, HE SAID...

...HIS MEANING IS CLEAR.

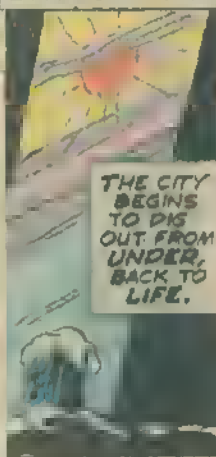


HE KISSES TRISH SOFTLY ON THE FORE-HEAD... APOLOGIZES TO HER NURSE FOR THE FRIGHT HE GAVE HER... STRIDES TO THE WINDOW, OPENS IT... AND LAUNCHES HIMSELF OUT INTO THE BLEAK NIGHT.



IT IS THREE A.M.

BY DAWN, ALMOST FOUR HOURS LATER, THE SNOW HAS STOPPED FALLING.



THE CITY BEGINS TO DIS OUT FROM UNDER, BACK TO LIFE.

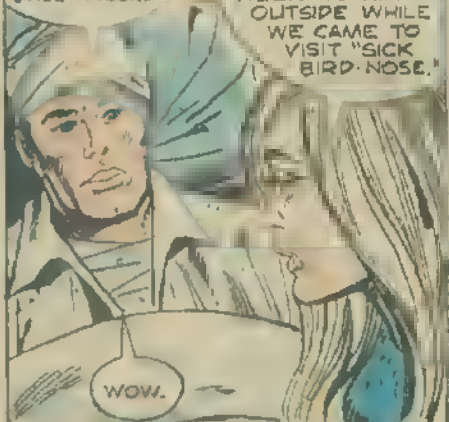
TEN A.M., 1 VISITORS' HOURS.

HEARD YOU HELPED SAVE MY LIFE, DOC. "THANKS" DOESN'T SEEM ENOUGH TO SAY.

DR. WYNTER PERFORMED THE SURGERY, KYLE. MERELY CONSULTED.



DON'T BE SO MODEST FOR ONCE. IT'S A MIRACLE I'M STILL AROUND



WOW.

IT'S AN EVEN GREATER MIRACLE STEPHEN WAS ABLE TO CONVINCE THE HULK TO WAIT OUTSIDE WHILE WE CAME TO VISIT "SICK BIRD-NOSE."

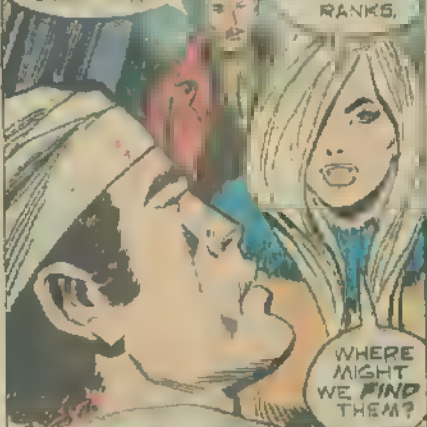
KYLE, IF I MAY BE SERIOUS FOR A MOMENT... HAVE YOU ANY NOTION WHO MAY HAVE PLANTED THE BOMB?



THERE'S ONLY ONE POSSIBILITY ISN'T THERE? KYLE RICHMOND HAS NO REAL ENEMIES, BUT NIGHTHAWK DOES-- THE SQUADRON SINISTER, IT'S KIND OF A WEIRD WAY FOR THEM TO ATTACK, BUT WHO ELSE IS THERE?



NO ONE...WHO KNOWS YOUR REAL IDENTITY. IT MUST BE TRUE. THEY'VE RETURNED FROM THE DEAD SOMEHOW.

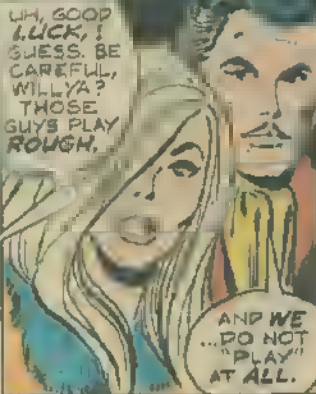


AND THEY CRAVE VEN-GEANCE FOR YOUR DEFECTION FROM THEIR RANKS.

WHERE MIGHT WE FIND THEM?

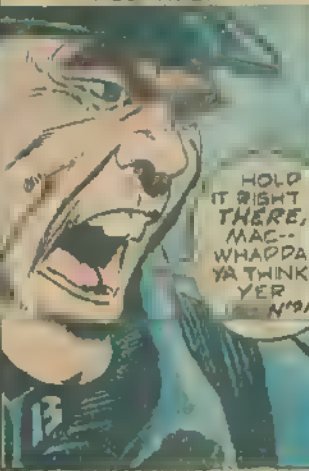
AND WHEN KYLE HAS INFORMED THEM OF HIS ERSTWHILE TEAMMATE'S LAST HEAD-QUARTERS...

UH, GOOD LUCK, I GUESS. BE CAREFUL, WILL YA? THOSE GUYS PLAY ROUGH.

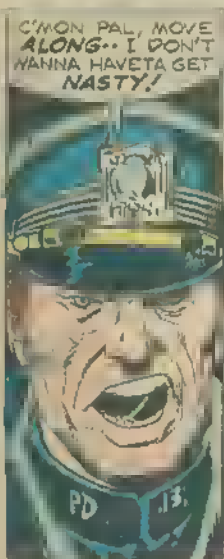


AND WE ...DO NOT "PLAY" AT ALL.

NOR DO THE BLUE-CLAD MEMBERS OF NEW YORK'S FINEST, OUTSIDE THE HOSPITAL!



HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, MAC-- WHADDA YA THINK YER N°9!







AND WE HAVE FAR MORE IMPORTANT CONCERNS NOW... THE SQUADRON SINISTER IS BACK!

WE THINK THEY WERE THE ONES WHO HURT NIGHTHAWK.

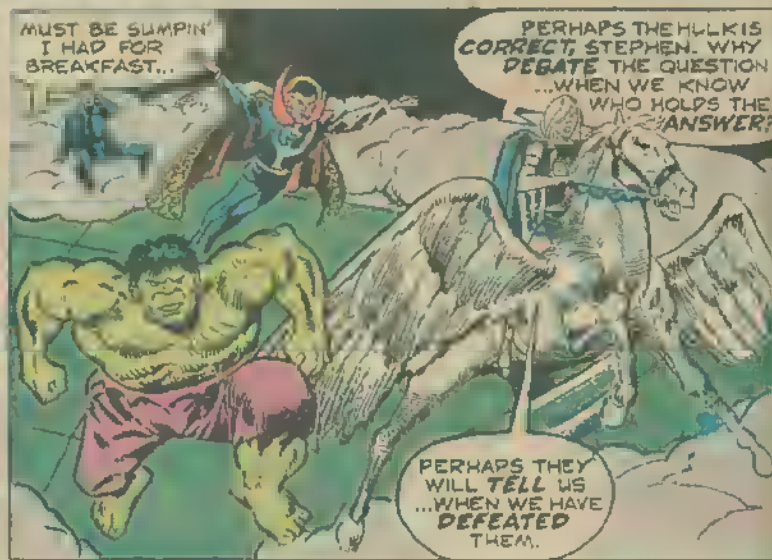


STEPHEN... I AM STILL TROUBLED BY ONE POINT, KYLE WAS AS PUZZLED AS WE ABOUT THE ABSENCE OF FUEL IN HIS AUTOMOBILE.

COULD IT BE--THE TANK? WHY WOULD THEY--?

--WHICH HAS CEASED OUR DISTINCTIVE GARB FROM MORTAL EYES.

SULP



PERHAPS THE HULK IS CORRECT, STEPHEN. WHY DEBATE THE QUESTION ...WHEN WE KNOW WHO HOLDS THE ANSWER?

PERHAPS THEY WILL TELL US ...WHEN WE HAVE DEFEATED THEM.

LOWER MANHATTAN: A GRIM AND VERY FATIGUED YELLOWJACKET PAUSES ON A ROOFTOP AFTER A SEVEN HOUR SEARCH THAT HAS TURNED UP NO TRACE OF HIS HATED ARCH-FOE.

MUST'VE CHECKED A HUNDRED FLOPHOUSES... AND I CAN'T EVEN COUNT THE POOR-WAYS...!

IF ANYONE HAS SEEN EGGHEAD... THEY'RE NOT TALKING ABOUT IT.

I SHOULD'VE FIGURED ON THIS. AN EX-AVenger IS JUST ANOTHER COP DOWN HERE... AND TOO MANY OF THESE MEN HAVE TOO MUCH OF THEIR OWN DIRTY LINEN TO HIDE.

I'M DEAD TIRED... BUT I'LL MAKE ONE LAST SWEEP OF THE AREA BEFORE -- EH?!

ON THE SIDEWALK BELOW ME... CAN I BE?

IT'S HIM!! I'D KNOW THAT POINTY HEAD ANYWHERE!

THUS, HE LEAPS FROM THE PARAPET DOWN TO THE STREET FOR--

# --THE CONFRONTATION.

EGGHEAD, YOU'VE GOT TWO SECONDS TO CONVINCE ME I SHOULDN'T SHOVE YOU SIDEWAYS DOWN A SEWER! START TALKING!

PYM!

S-STAY AWAY F-FROM ME... I'VE DONE NOTHING... TO YOU...!

THAT'S RIGHT. NOT A THING. BUT YOU PLANTED THAT BOMB IN KYLE RICHMOND'S CAR, DIDN'T YOU? YOU TRIED TO KILL YOUR OWN NIECE, DIDN'T YOU?

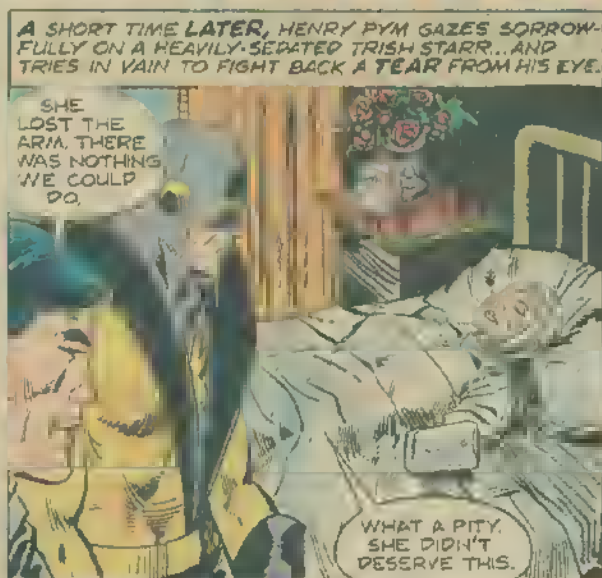
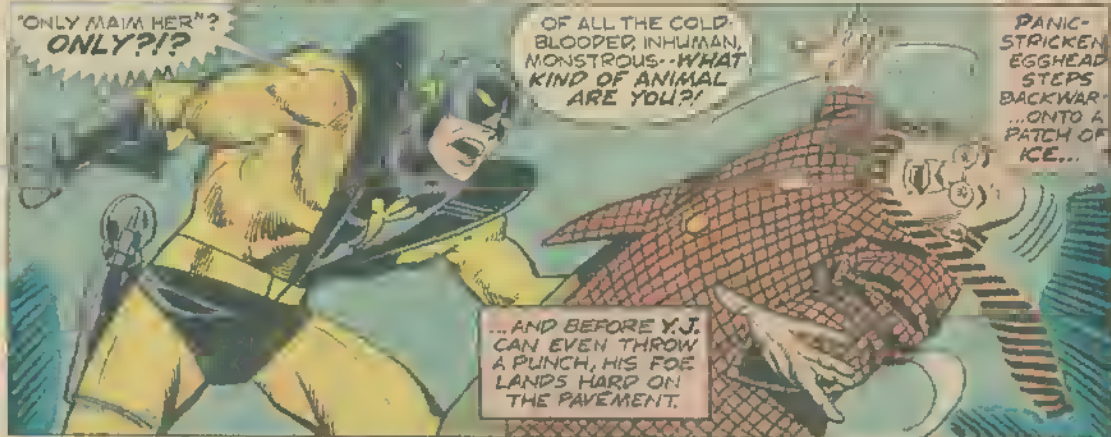
N-NO! I N-NEVER INTENDED TO KILL HER!

I JUST WANTED HER TO SUFFER-- AS I'VE SUFFERED! THAT'S WHY I SI-PHONED THE GAS FROM THE TANK! OH, YES... I WANTED TO DESTROY HER BEAUTY...

I WANTED HER TO LOSE HER CAREER-- HER FORTUNE-- HER PRES-TIGE-- AS I HAVE!

BUT I NEVER MEANT TO KILL HER-- ONLY MAIM HER!





BEFORE SHE WENT INTO SURGERY, SHE ASKED THAT YOU LOOK IN ON MR. RICHMOND, LET HIM KNOW SHE WAS ALL RIGHT.

WERE THOSE ACTUALLY THE WORDS SHE USED, DOCTOR? I'M TO TELL HIM SHE'S "ALL RIGHT?"

THE DOCTOR SIGHS...CLOSES HIS EYES...AND NODS, AND YELLOWJACKET DEPARTS FOR KYLE'S ROOM.

SHE ACCEPTS THE IDEA OF THE LOSS...

BUT WILL SHE ACCEPT THE REALITY OF IT WHEN SHE AWAKENS--AND HER LEFT ARM ISN'T THERE?

HER INTELLECT WON'T HELP HER DEAL WITH THAT. IT'S PURELY AN EMOTIONAL ADJUSTMENT.

HELLO? WHO... YELLOW-JACKET? WHAT ON EARTH...?

I'M FLATTERED YOU RECALL THE NAME. I'VE BEEN OUT OF THE LIMELIGHT FOR QUITE AWHILE.

TRIXIE STARR ASKED ME TO SEE YOU. I'VE GOT GOOD NEWS...AND BAD.

YOU KNOW TRISH?

QUIETLY, HANK TELLS THE TALE OF HIS FIRST MEETING WITH TRISH... "SHE CALLED HERSELF 'TRIXIE,' THEN"... AND THEN OF HIS CONFRONTATION LESS THAN AN HOUR AGO WITH EGG-HEAD, BUT WHEN HE IS FINISHED...

YOU LOOK PALE, MR. RICHMOND. WHAT DID I SAY...?

YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BELIEVE THIS...!

ABRUPTLY, KYLE BLURTS OUT THE SECRET OF HIS NIGHTHAWK IDENTITY...AND THE DEFENDERS...AND THE MISSION THEY HAVE UNDERTAKEN...FOR NO REASON!

YOU'VE GOT TO GO AFTER THEM--STOP THEM, BEFORE--

BEFORE WHAT? EVEN IF THIS WILD STORY IS TRUE, YOUR FRIENDS ARE IN NO DANGER.

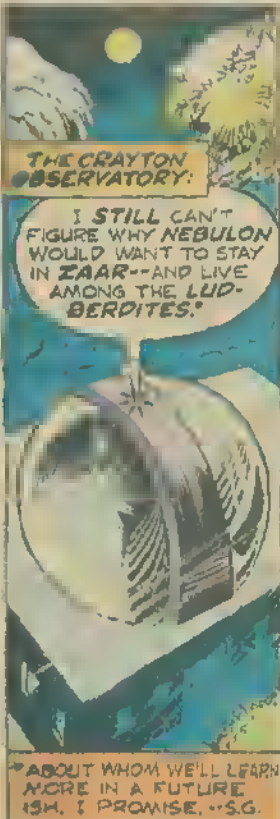
YOU JUST TOLD ME...YOU SAW THE SQUADRON SINISTER GET BLOWN TO BITS.\* THEY'RE DEAD.

ISN'T THAT WHAT YOU THOUGHT...ABOUT EGGHEAD?

YOU WIN. AND WHO NEEDS SLEEP ANYWAY? WHERE DID YOU SEND THESE "DEFENDERS"?

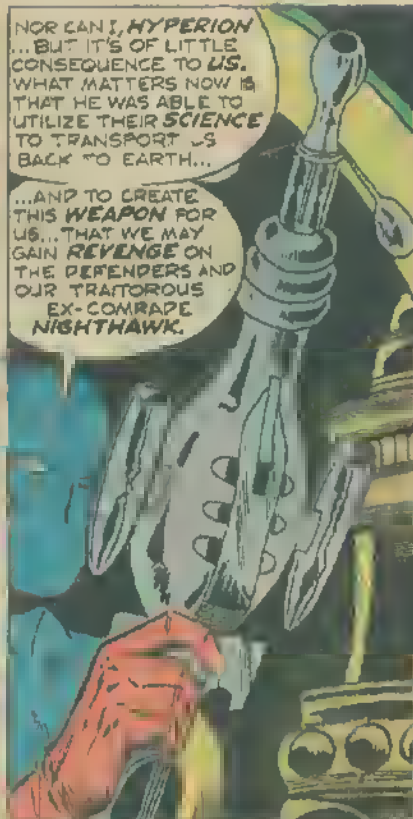
\* IN DEFENDERS #14. --LEN.





**THE CRAYTON OBSERVATORY:**

I STILL CAN'T FIGURE WHY NEBULON WOULD WANT TO STAY IN ZAAR--AND LIVE AMONG THE LUD-BERDITES.



NOR CAN I, HYPERION... BUT IT'S OF LITTLE CONSEQUENCE TO US. WHAT MATTERS NOW IS THAT HE WAS ABLE TO UTILIZE THEIR SCIENCE TO TRANSPORT US BACK TO EARTH...

...AND TO CREATE THIS WEAPON FOR US... THAT WE MAY GAIN REVENGE ON THE DEFENDERS AND OUR TRAITOROUS EX-COMRADE NIGHTHAWK.

ABOUT WHOM WE'LL LEARN MORE IN A FUTURE ISK. I PROMISE. --S.G.



I'LL BELIEVE - WHEN I SEE IT WORK, SPECTRUM.

THE WEAPON WON'T DO IT ALONE, HYPERION. WE MADE THAT MISTAKE LAST TIME... RELYING ON OUTSIDE



THAT'S WHAT I MEAN, WHIZZER! WE'VE GOT TO HAVE A PLAN OF ATTACK--A WAY TO USE OUR BIGGEST ADVANTAGE, THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE. REMEMBER, THE DEFENDERS PROBABLY DON'T EVEN THINK WE'RE ALIVE!



AT THAT MOMENT, AS IF ON CUE--

**CHOOM**

**HULK SMASH SINISTERS!!**

"WHAT IS THIS?" CRIES HYPERION. "WE HAVEN'T BEEN BACK ON EARTH A FULL HOUR YET! WE HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING--GIVEN ANY SIGN OF OUR RETURN! HOW DID THEY KNOW??"

SHUT UP!  
HULK KNOWS!  
YOU BLEW UP  
BIRD. NOSE--  
MADE HIM  
SICK!

WHAT?!

WHIZZER  
-GET OVER HERE!  
DISTRACT THIS  
GREEN--MMPH--

HIS SUPER-  
SPEED CANNOT  
HELP YOU NOW,  
DR. SPECTRUM.  
HE IS HELD  
FAST--BY THE  
VAPORS OF  
VALTORR!

AND HYPERION IS  
STILL REELING--

THUS, ONLY  
SPECTRUM,  
THE WEAK-  
EST OF THE  
THREE, RE-  
MAINS TO BE  
POWNERD!

HUH! DUMB SINISTER  
GOES FOR GUN! NO  
GUN CAN HURT  
HULK!

WE SHALL SEE  
ABOUT THAT, MY  
BRUTISH FRIEND.  
FOR THIS IS NO  
ORDINARY WEAP-  
ON. IT ABSORBS  
ENERGY, RATHER  
THAN DIS-  
CHARGING SAME.

HULK DOESN'T  
UNDERSTAND...  
BIG WORDS...  
BUT...

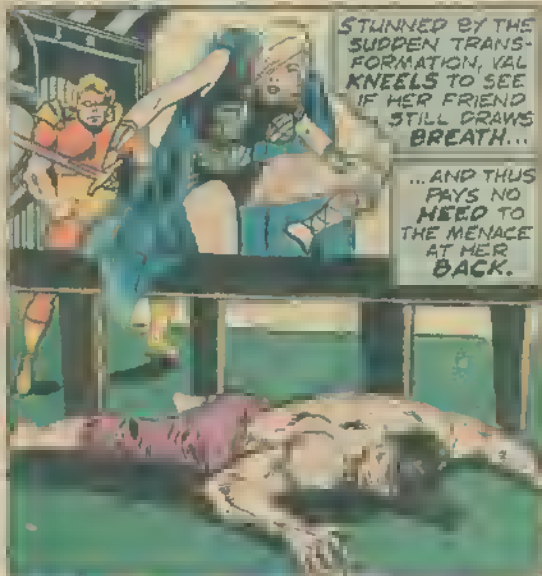
HULK FEELS  
WEAK. HULK  
IS--

--CHANGING!

--BANNER.

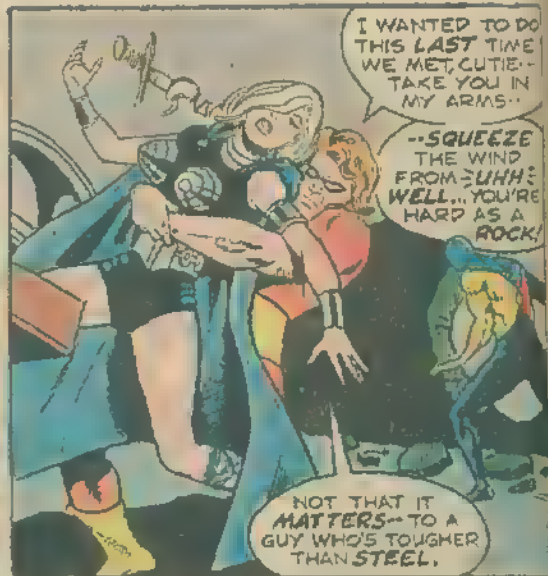
CHANGING  
BACK INTO  
PUNY--





STUNNED BY THE  
SUDDEN TRANS-  
FORMATION, VAL  
KNEELS TO SEE  
IF HER FRIEND  
STILL DRAWS  
BREATH...

...AND THUS  
PAYS NO  
NEED TO  
THE MENACE  
AT HER  
BACK.



I WANTED TO DO  
THIS LAST TIME!  
WE MET, CUTIE--  
TAKE YOU IN  
MY ARMS--

--SQUEEZE  
THE WIND  
FROM--UHH--  
WELL...YOU'RE  
HARD AS A  
ROCK!

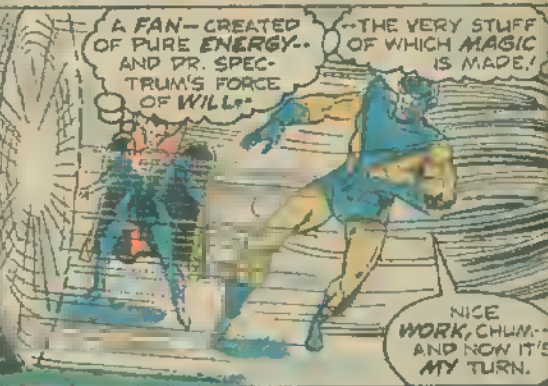
NOT THAT IT  
MATTERS--TO A  
GUY WHO'S TOUGHER  
THAN STEEL.



SHE'S OUT  
SPECTRUM.

AND SO IS THE WHIZZER--

--OUT OF HIS  
MISTY CAGE,  
THANKS TO MY  
POWER PRISM!



A FAN-CREATED  
OF PURE ENERGY--  
AND DR. SPEC-  
TRUM'S FORCE  
OF WILL--

--THE VERY STUFF  
OF WHICH MAGIC  
IS MADE!

NICE  
WORK, CHUM--  
AND NOW IT'S  
MY TURN.



A LITTLE FAST N' FANCY FOOTWO--  
AND WHIZZER CLIPS THE WIZARD--

--BEFORE  
HE CAN  
OPEN HIS  
MOUTH TO  
UTTER  
ANOTHER  
SPELL!



AND I HOPE I'VE  
MADE A BELIEVER  
OF YOU, HYPERION.  
FOR BY ROBBING  
THEM OF  
THE HULK'S  
RAW POW-  
ER--

YEAH,  
I GET IT.  
THAT WEAPON  
WAS THE CRUCIAL  
FACTOR--IN THE  
TOTAL DEFEAT  
OF THE  
DEFENDERS!

NOT QUITE  
TOTAL, MUSCLES  
...DIDN'T YOU  
HEAR THE HULK?

\*THEY'VE GOT  
A NEW MEMBER  
HE CALLS 'BIRD-  
NOSE.' SOUND  
...FAMILIAR?\*

HOW LONG IT HAS  
BEEN SINCE HER  
CONSCIOUSNESS  
OR VALKYRIE  
CANNOT DETERMINE.

INDEED, SHE IS  
AWARE AT FIRST  
ONLY OF THE  
BLACKNESS,  
THE ABSENCE  
OF THOUGHT  
AND LIGHT.

THEN, SLOWLY  
THE EBONY  
CLOUD PARTS...



IMAGES SEEP  
IN TO FILL  
THE VOID...  
FLESH AND  
IRON...

SWIRLING SHAPES  
...STILL FORMS  
...AND COLD AND  
DAMP... GREY STONE...



THE AS-  
GARDIAN  
PART OF  
HER RECOGNIZES  
THE MOTIF...

...AN IMPROVED DUNGEON, LIKELY IN THE BASEMENT OF THE OBSERVATORY.

STEPHEN...  
DR. BANNER...

NO MOVEMENT,  
NO REPLY...BUT  
THEY BREATHE

THEY  
ARE  
ALIVE, AT  
LEAST.

BUT AS THE  
VALKYRIE POSSESSES  
THE GREATEST  
PHYSICAL  
STRENGTH OF  
THE TRIO, SHE  
IS THE FIRST  
TO AWAKEN...

...THE FIRST TO DISCOVER THE DESPERATE  
QUALITY OF THEIR SITUATION: WRISTS IN  
SHACKLES, JAW CLAMPED SHUT, DOCTOR  
STRANGE CANNOT SPEAK HIS SPELLS NOR  
MAKE HIS MAGICAL GESTURES. DRAINED  
EMOTIONALLY AS WELL AS PHYSICALLY,  
BANNER CANNOT BECOME THE HULK...  
EVEN IF HE WANTED TO.



AND DESPITE HER TREMENDOUS POWER, VALKYRIE CANNOT FREE HERSELF FROM THE BLOCK OF ADAMANTIUM ALLOY IN WHICH DR. SPECTRUM HAS ENCASED HER.

NO USE...  
NO MATTER  
HOW HARD  
I STRAIN...

THE POSITIONING OF MY LIMBS IS SUCH... THAT I AM STRUGGLING AGAINST MYSELF. I FEAR THAT THIS TIME WE ARE TRULY--

I THINK  
NOT VAL.

WHO--?

HERE, VAL--IN MY ASTRAL FORM, WHICH NO CHAINS CAN HOLD. I SENSE A FRIENDLY PRESENCE ABOVE US.

THUS, TO ABANDON HOPE NOW WOULD BE... PREMATURE.

PARTICULARLY NOW THAT I SEE WHO IS IN OUR

YOU ARE CALLED  
YELLOWJACKET,  
I BELIEVE?

HUH--?!

DO NOT BE  
ALARMED. I AM  
DR. STRANGE, NOT  
AN ILLUSION  
NOR A HAUNT.

I SEE. THEN YOU'RE ONE OF THE, UM, PEOPLE I'M LOOKING FOR. YOUR PAL NIGHTHAWK SENT ME.

YOU  
SEE... THE FIGHT  
THAT TORE THIS  
PLACE APART WAS  
...UNNECESSARY.

I'M NOT  
CERTAIN... I  
UNDER-  
STAND.

"BUT YOU CAN EXPLAIN MORE FULLY AFTER MY COMRADES AND I HAVE BEEN FREED. WE ARE NOW PRISONED BELOW THIS ROOM..."

I'M ON  
MY WAY,  
DOC.

I ONLY HOPE  
I'M ABLE TO  
HELP YOU.

A MOMENT LATER, AN EBONY BOOT COMES CRASHING THROUGH THE WOODEN DOOR OF THE CELLAR... AND DR. STRANGE RE-ENTERS IN HIS OWN DISTINCTIVE MANNER.

YOU SEE, VAL...  
IT WAS NOT  
YET TIME TO  
DESPAIR.



MAYBE NOT DESPAIR, DOC... BUT THERE'S NO CAUSE TO CELEBRATE, EITHER. I CAN'T BREAK THESE BONDS MY STRENGTH IS NO GREATER THAN ANY NORMAL MAN'S.

THE WEAPON YOU WEAR... MIGHT IT BE OF HELP?

I DON'T SEE HOW.

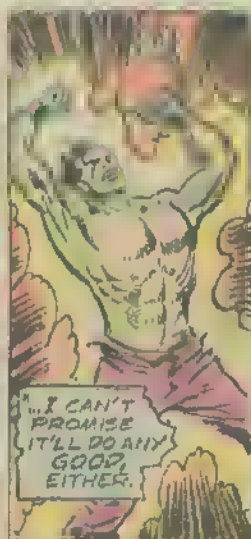
IT ONLY AFFECTS LIVING TISSUE, IT CAN RUPTURE EVERY CELL IN A MAN'S BODY OR DISRUPT THEIR FUNCTIONING MOMENTARILY BUT IT'S USELESS ON METAL AND STONE.

AND WHAT EFFECT MIGHT SUCH A DISRUPTION HAVE... ON DR. BANNER?

THAT... IS A GOOD QUESTION.



I'VE SET THE BEAM AT LOW INTENSITY. IT'LL DO NO PERMANENT DAMAGE. BUT ON THE OTHER HAND...



...I CAN'T PROMISE IT'LL DO ANY GOOD, EITHER.



"BUT THEN, THAT DEPENDS ON HOW WE DEFINE 'GOOD,' I SUPPOSE."

WHAT IS HULK DOING IN CHAINS?



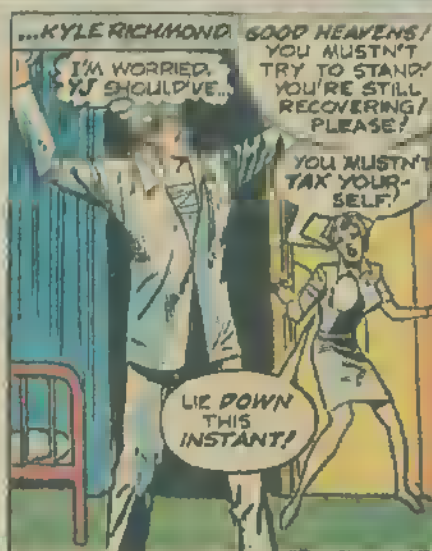
YOU... MAN IN BUG-SUIT... DID YOU CHAIN HULK AND FRIENDS? HULK WILL SMASH YOU...!

SMASH THEIR SHACKLES, GREENSKIN... CAREFULLY, DR. STRANGE WILL TELL YOU... I'M ON YOUR SIDE.



NIGHTFALL. THE MOON RISES FULL IN THE SKY...

...AND WORKS ITS INVIGORATING EFFECT ON...



...KYLE RICHMOND I'M WORRIED. YOU SHOULD'VE...

GOOD HEAVENS! YOU MUSTN'T TRY TO STAND! YOU'RE STILL RECOVERING! PLEASE!

YOU MUSTN'T TAX YOURSELF!

LIE DOWN THIS INSTANT!



BUT THE TIME FOR LYING  
DOWN IS PAST.



A MAMMOTH  
SCARLET HAND SHATTERS THE  
MORTAR AND STEEL OF THE HOS-  
PITAL'S OUTSIDE WALL...

...AND WRAPS ITS BLOOD-RED  
FINGERS ABOUT KYLE RICH-  
MOND.



OH, MAN!  
NOT MUCH  
DOUBT WHO'S  
BEHIND  
THIS!

BUT IF DR. SPECTRUM IS  
HERE-- THAT MEANS THE  
DEFENDERS HAVE BEEN  
BEATEN--MAYBE  
KILLED!



WE'VE BEEN  
LOOKING ALL  
OVER FOR  
YOU, BEAK-  
FACE.

TOOK US A WHILE  
TO FIND YOU. WE  
CHECKED YOUR  
MANSION OUT ON  
THE ISLAND..YOUR  
PENTHOUSE HERE  
IN TOWN... AND  
THEN WE SAW  
THE PAPERS.



YOU WILL COME TO  
WITH US NOW,  
KYLE--TO DIE  
BESIDE YOUR  
NEWFOUND  
TEAMMATES.

BY ALL THE HOARY  
HOSTS OF HOGGOTH  
--HE SHALL NOT!



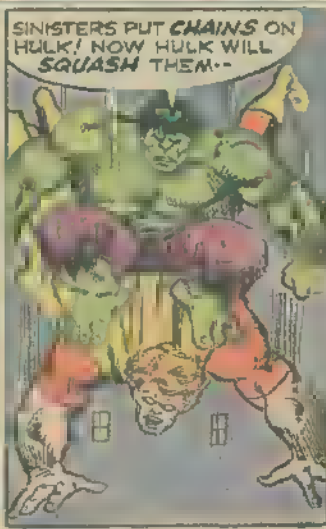
DOC!



VAL!!



AND HULK IS  
HERE, TOO--  
AND HULK IS  
ANGRY!



SINISTERS PUT CHAINS ON  
HULK! NOW HULK WILL  
SQUASH THEM--



--FLAT!!

THOOM

BUT WHEN HE REACHES STREET LEVEL, STILL MOVING AT HIGH SPEED, WHIZZER FINDS A DISTRACTION OF HIS OWN.

WAVING WILDLY, ATTEMPTING TO DISPEL THE MADDENING SOUND, WHIZZER LOSES HIS FOOTING ON THE KY PAVEMENT.

AND AT THE END OF THAT SKID, AS HE STRUGGLES DIZZILY TO HIS FEET, THE "BUZZ" REGAINS ITS FULL SIZE.

BUZZING IN MY EARS—WHAT—?

BLAST! IF I DON'T GET DOWN THERE AND DISTRACT THAT GREEN IDIOT—HYPERION'S HAD IT!

WHEEEEEE

—AND GOES INTO A BLOCK-LONG, SUPER-SPEED SKID!

—AND PROVES IT CAN BE MORE THAN MERELY A DISTRACTION.

ABOVE, HOWEVER, THE TURN OF EVENTS IS LESS ENCOURAGING. DR. STRANGE FINDS HIMSELF ENCLOSED IN A NEARLY AIR-LESS CUBE OF POWER, PRISM ENERGY, IN WHICH SOUND WAVES WILL NOT CARRY!

SOMEWHERE, SINCE LAST WE MET, DR. SPECTRUM HAS LEARNED AT LEAST THE RUDIMENTS OF MAGICAL THEORY...

...THAT THE NAMES OF THE DEITIES AND DEMONS MUST BE SPOKEN TO PROVIDE A FOCAL POINT FOR THE SPELL.



"AND THAT BIT OF KNOWLEDGE,  
COMBINED WITH HIS POWER  
PRISM, MAY BE ENOUGH TO  
SUFFOCATE ME...IN SILENCE."

**KRAK!**

HARD TO  
BELIEVE  
--BUT  
YOU REALLY  
ARE  
AS STUPID  
AS YOU  
LOOK!

I CAN WITHSTAND  
AN ATOMIC BLAST,  
YOU CRETIN! I'M  
INVULNERABLE!

IN-VUN--  
INV--  
HULK  
DOESN'T CARE  
WHAT YOU  
ARE/HULK IS  
STRONGEST  
THERE IS!

MAYBE SO--BUT IT  
DOESN'T MATTER!  
MY BODY'S IMPREG-  
NABLE TO HARM!  
YOUR BLOWS CAN'T  
HURT ME!

THEN HULK  
WILL HURT  
YOU  
ANOTHER  
WAY!

**KDOUH-**

MY  
EARS!

THE HULK SLAMS HIS  
MASSIVE PALMS  
TOGETHER-- JUST  
ONCE.

**-DUH-WHOM**

BUT THE SOUND OF THAT SINGLE CLAP  
IS SO DEAFENING-- THE SHOCKWAVES  
THAT FOLLOW THE SOUND SO POWER-  
FUL-- THAT NOT ONLY DOES HYPERION  
GO REELING... NOT ONLY DOES THE WALL  
AT HIS BACK CRUMBLE AND FALL...

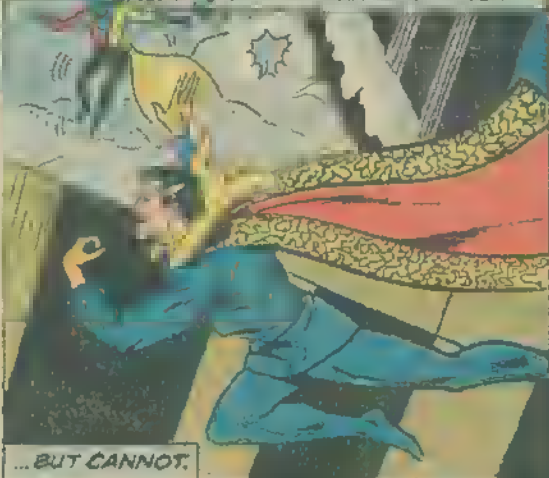
--BUT THE VIBRATIONS TRAVEL FOR BLOCKS, SHATTERING WIN-DOWS UP AND DOWN NINTH AVENUE--

--AND SPLINTERING ONE OTHER PIECE OF GLASS AS WELL.



NO!!  
THE  
PRISM!

STUNNED BY THE SUDDEN DESTRUCTION OF HIS WEAPON, DR. SPECTRUM TRIES TO MAINTAIN HIS BALANCE ON THE QUAVERING WALL...



...BUT CANNOT.

HE FALLS...BUT DR. STRANGE CALL UPON THE LIGHT OF THE MOONS OF MUNIPOOR...



...TO SLOW HIS PLUNGE, SO THAT HE LANDS SAFELY, IF NOT SOFTLY, ON THE BACK OF HIS ALLEGEDLY INVULNERABLE CONFEDERATE.



A MOMENT LATER, VAL REJOINS THE OTHERS ON THE STREET...

I WAS IN THE HOSPITAL...I WISHED TO BE CERTAIN KYLE WAS UNHARMED BEFORE...

NO NEED TO EXPLAIN FURTHER, VAL. I UNDERSTAND.

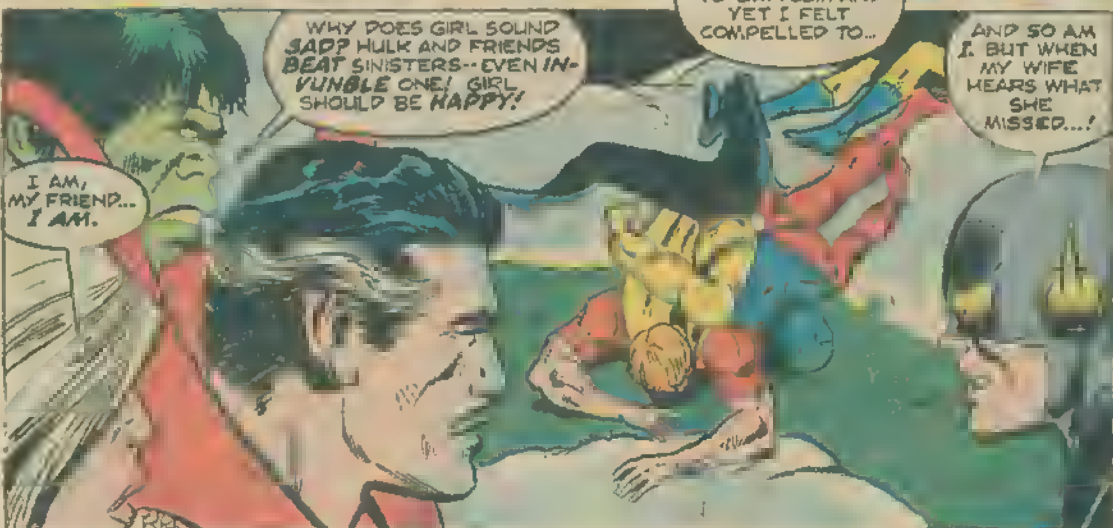


DO YOU, STEPHEN? TRULY? FOR I DO NOT. ALL MY INSTINCTS CALLED ME TO BATTLE... AND YET I FELT COMPELLED TO...

AND SO AM I. BUT WHEN MY WIFE HEARS WHAT SHE MISSED...!

WHY DOES GIRL SOUND SADD HULK AND FRIENDS BEAT SINISTERS--EVEN INVUNBLE ONE! GIRL SHOULD BE HAPPY!

I AM, MY FRIEND... I AM.





**Epilog:** SOME WEEKS LATER, A STROLL DOWN PARK AVENUE IN THE GILL OF THE NIGHT.

TRISH, YOU CAN'T LEAVE NEW YORK. YOU CAN'T LEAVE ME. I'M NO GOOD WITH WORDS, BUT--

SHALL I PLAY PIANO FOR YOU, KYLE--OR WOULD YOU PREFER FLUTE--OR MAYBE YOU'D LIKE ME TO PAINT YOUR PORTRAIT?

WHAT? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

PART OF ME IS GONE, KYLE. PART OF WHO I WAS. I'M NOT THE PERSON YOU USED TO KNOW. OH, I CAN IMAGINE WHAT YOU'RE FEELING AND WHAT YOU MISTAKE IT FOR...

PITY? YOU THINK? PITY YOU.

BULL! YOU LOST ONE ARM, TRISH, NOT YOUR HEAD, FOR CRYING OUT LOUD! IT DOESN'T MATTER--!

IT HAS TO MATTER, KYLE, YOU WOULDN'T BE HUMAN IF IT DIDN'T.

YOU'RE WRONG--

AM I? THEN LOOK ME IN THE EYE AND TELL ME YOU LOVE ME, KYLE. ASK ME TO MARRY YOU --TO STAY WITH YOU FOREVER.

OR IS A COLD HOWLING WIND STILL ALL YOU HEAR?

TRISH, THAT'S UNFAIR, I'M NOT READY TO COMMIT MYSELF LIKE THAT --TO ANYONE.

Y'KNOW... LIFE REALLY STINKS SOMETIMES...

IT'S ALL BEEN SAID, THEN, GOODBYE, KYLE... FOR NOW.

FINIS